

the American Legion's reputation as both a veteran's advocacy and community service organization. Under Wallace's leadership, the post received state and national attention as a leader in supporting the Boys State Program, a program which teaches lessons of patriotism and civics to high school juniors. He also worked with the American Legion Baseball program and oratorical contests that offered scholarships to local participants.

Although Mr. Wallace does not like taking credit for the success of the group, many veterans and families in the Shoals will tell you that without him the Legion would not be what it is today. Wallace simply believes that his work at the American Legion is just the continuation of work begun by an earlier generation, the original Legionnaires who established the post in 1919 and the World War I veterans who built their current hall in 1939. As adjutant, Wallace helped maintain this building that has been their home for 64 years.

Mr. Speaker, I also want to pay tribute to Mr. Wallace's wife of 60 years, Mrs. Ellen Wallace. As his assistant at the Legion, Mrs. Wallace filed paperwork and served with the Ladies Auxiliary during the chicken stews and other activities. Mr. Wallace credits her with making him the man he is today.

Despite the irregular hours, low pay, and lack of prestige, both Mr. and Mrs. Wallace enjoyed helping many people during their time of service with the American Legion. They have dedicated themselves to their community, and on behalf of the people of north Alabama I thank them for their service and congratulate them on a job well done.

INTRODUCTION OF A BILL TO AUTHORIZE CERTAIN MAJOR MEDICAL FACILITY PROJECTS FOR THE DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS

HON. LANE EVANS

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, June 5, 2003

Mr. EVANS. Mr. Speaker, today, I am introducing a bill with my friend, the chairman of the Veterans Affairs Health Subcommittee, ROB SIMMONS. This bill will authorize several desperately needed major medical construction projects in Chicago, IL; San Diego, CA; Las Vegas, NV; and West Haven, CT. I urge all of my colleagues to support this bill to jump start the stalled major medical construction endeavor in the Department of Veterans Affairs.

My bill would honor the commitment the Department of Veterans Affairs made to build a new bed tower at the West Side division of VA Chicago. While Secretary Anthony Principi has decided to move forward with the closure of inpatient services at the Lakeside division, he has not asked for an appropriation for the new construction project at West Side. Instead, the funding for this project—\$98.5 million—is supposed to come from an enhanced use lease agreement whose value some experts claim has been greatly overestimated. I am not willing to make such a gamble on veterans' access to a functional medical center in the Chicago area.

The West Side facility is a 50-year old facility ill-suited to respond to the demands of a modern health care delivery system, even

without the additional workload anticipated from the integration with Lakeside scheduled for early August. VA Chicago is working to accommodate its inpatients in a facility that has inadequate intensive care units, inpatient units, and surgical suites. Once the new facility is operational, the existing facility will also have to undergo significant renovations to improve the emergency department, laboratory and radiological services, and food and nutritional areas.

Because of the importance and the urgency of this project, my legislation would prohibit VA Chicago from disposing, in any manner, of the Lakeside division without first entering into a contract for the construction of the new bed tower promised to Chicago area veterans.

The bill would also fund a project to replace the existing ambulatory care center in Las Vegas, NV. As my good friend, Shelley Berkeley often reminds the Committee, Las Vegas has the fastest growing populations in the country and its veteran enrollees are not expected to peak until 2012. Veterans' use of services is expected to remain higher than it is currently throughout the 20-year timeframe studied for VA's Capital Assets Realignment for Enhanced Services project.

Unfortunately, in constructing a new ambulatory care clinic there in 1997, VA seems to have fallen prey to a contractor whose work was seriously substandard. An independent assessment by John A. Martin and Associates yielded an opinion that the clinic was "unsafe for continued occupancy." Because of the contractor's repeated failure to address serious structural deficiencies in the building, VA is now forced to abandon it. As an interim measure, VA is sending its patients to 10 different ambulatory care clinics around the city. This inefficient delivery system is forcing VA to add 80 full-time employees with significant new operational costs. My bill would request \$97.3 million to build a new centralized facility that would also include space for a new regional office for the Veterans Benefits Administration.

In FY 2002, VA listed seismic corrections at the San Diego VA Medical Center as one of its highest construction priorities. Later, I am told, cost considerations—not any change in the assessment of need—yielded a lower priority for the project. I am still convinced that there is a great risk to VA patients and staff at the site and my bill would authorize \$48.6 million to address the needs at the facility.

West Haven VA Medical Center is in serious need of major renovations to its inpatient wards and research facilities. For many years, the inpatient ward renovations have been a high priority for VA construction, but resources have not allowed the project to move forward. I am requesting \$50 million for this project and to renovate the research facilities.

Finally, Charlotte, NC, is home to one of the largest populations in the country without a significant VA health care system presence. The project requested in this bill would allow VA to greatly expand its current workload in a clinic in the downtown area and enroll veterans who are now unable to receive care. I have included \$3 million for the cost of the lease.

All of these projects merit our immediate attention and approval by all Members. I urge your favorable consideration.

HONORING COLE REVIS

HON. SCOTT McINNIS

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, June 5, 2003

Mr. McINNIS. Mr. Speaker, it is with a profound sense of pride that I stand before this Congress to speak about the actions of Cole Revis. Cole, a second grader in Grand Junction, Colorado, has shown more kindness and maturity in the face of adversity than most people have three times his age. Cole's father, a veteran of the first Gulf War, passed away this spring from skin cancer. Cole understood the sacrifices his father made in the service of our country and he is trying his best to follow his father's courageous example.

Mark Revis, Cole's father, was a Staff Sergeant in the 143rd Signal Company of the Colorado National Guard for six years, having previously served for 14 years in the Army. Mark was forced to retire from the National Guard when he was diagnosed with Multiple Sclerosis. He was later diagnosed with lung cancer and then skin cancer. Mark fought each disease and that same fighting spirit is evident in his son. He passed away in February, at the age of 44.

After receiving a death benefit check from the government, Cole felt strongly that this inheritance should go to his father's fellow soldiers. While most eight year olds would have bought candy, Cole wanted to use his money in a way that would help others. So Cole decided his money would be spent buying care packages for United States troops serving in Operation Iraqi Freedom.

Mr. Speaker, I am honored to speak today about Cole Revis. His passion, kindness, maturity and heart are an inspiration to us all. Cole's optimism and understanding of the role and duty that his father fulfilled have allowed him to understand that while his father is gone, his actions will never be forgotten. I know that if he were here today, Mark Revis would be extremely proud of his son. Thank you, Cole. Your actions are a testament to the will and unyielding strength that America's youth represents.

RECOGNIZING AND COMMENDING ALL WHO PARTICIPATED IN AND SUPPORTED OPERATION ENDURING FREEDOM IN AFGHANISTAN AND OPERATION IRAQI FREEDOM IN IRAQ

SPEECH OF

HON. JIM SAXTON

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, June 4, 2003

Mr. SAXTON. Mr. Speaker, with yesterday's passage of H. Con. Res. 177, we formally recognized and commended our Armed Forces for their participation and success in Operation Enduring Freedom and Operation Iraqi Freedom. Our magnificent men and women in uniform serve as the greatest ambassadors of what is good and right in our world. They are the bearers of the tremendous might, the indomitable spirit, and the boundless compassion of our nation and the freedom loving people everywhere.

Our forces are, as they always have been throughout our history, Americans first, citizen soldiers, and great patriots. They have come from ordinary walks of life rising to do extraordinary things that shape our world and leave us forever awestruck. I again want to extend our collective and sincere thanks to all our members who serve, and I also want to recognize a particular group of truly unsung yet most deserving heroes—our U.S. Merchant Mariners.

Once again, our country has turned to its mariners to take the fight to the enemy, to project our force half a world away, to secure the precious freedom that now spreads to an Iraqi people free to choose their own destiny, to raise their families as they choose, and to renew the glories of one of the world's greatest civilizations. Our liberating force was decisive and it moved on the brawn, ingenuity, and dedication of our merchant marine. Not in 12 years have we moved such a force by sea, and we have done it better, against greater challenge than ever before.

We recently saw a line of ships spread from our east coast through the Straights of Gibraltar, through the Suez Canal and the Red Sea, and into the Gulf of Oman—a “steel bridge” of resolve. A bridge as strong as those mariners who crew our enormous ships and who go on in harms way to deliver our force anyplace, anytime they are called.

Since the beginning of the War on Terrorism, over 6,800 U.S. merchant mariners and civil servant mariners have served and provided support to our global military operations. Currently serving on 211 vessels, our U.S. mariners face many of the same hazards confronting our uniformed military as they regularly transit and operate within potential targeted areas of chemical and biological weapons, waterborne mines, and terrorist activities. Truly, our country's merchant mariners have answered the call selflessly and brilliantly.

Our mariners activated and crewed 40 vessels of our ready reserve force, essential to the early movement of ammunition, tanks, aircraft, and military vehicles. These U.S. mariners crewed our vital prepositioned ships and our fast response surge sealift vessels, providing time-critical warfighting equipment and supplies to the battlefield. Over 4,000 civil servant mariners manned and supported the continuous worldwide operations of our ships supporting U.S. naval and coalition forces at sea. Around the clock, every day, across the globe, our mariners make it happen.

At this crucial time in history, our U.S. mariners stepped forward with skill, bravery, and an unrivaled legacy of service. They made all the difference. Our nation continues to rely on these warriors, and their impact is profound. Long after the fighting stops, our mariners will still be on the watch, returning the troops, sustaining the force, and providing for the needy as we renew a proud but shattered land.

Mr. Speaker, on behalf of our Congress and a grateful Nation, it is my humble honor to say thank you to all our U.S. Merchant Mariners. We wish them God Speed and a safe return. They are indeed a national treasure—long may they serve.

OMAR BRADLEY DAY

HON. KENNY C. HULSHOF

OF MISSOURI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, June 5, 2003

Mr. HULSHOF. Mr. Speaker, earlier this month, Moberly, Missouri celebrated its annual Omar Bradley Day. This day is an opportunity for area residents to remember a great hero and reflect on General Bradley's role in preserving the freedoms we hold dear.

As such, I wish to enter the following article, “Who Is Omar Bradley and Why Should I Care?” into the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD. Written by Moberly resident Sam Richardson, this item appeared in the Sunday, May 11, 2003 edition of the Moberly Monitor-Index. I believe the points it makes are a fitting tribute to General Bradley.

WHO IS OMAR BRADLEY AND WHY SHOULD I CARE?

Here's a good topic to toss around over your dinner tonight:

“Who is Omar Bradley and why should I care?”

It's a fair question around these parts, what with the annual General Omar Bradley Luncheon, Lecture and Symposium coming up Monday, May 12, at the Municipal Auditorium in Moberly.

“What did old Omar Bradley do to cause a whole lot of people to come to his hometown 22 years after he died?”

Another more than fair question.

The stock answer is that he is Missouri's most famous military figure, a member of the Missouri Hall of Fame, a guy with a 34-cent stamp with his picture on it, the fellow captured in bronze in the soaring statue in Rothwell Park, the “Bradley” who is the namesake for the Bradley Fighting Vehicle so prominent in last month's Operation Iraqi Freedom.

Moberly public schools, St. Pius X School, Moberly Area Community College, the University of Missouri, Truman State University and other educational institutions in Bradley's home state may teach young Missourians why Omar Bradley is important to them. And, indeed, he is important to them.

Of course, young and old alike should know Bradley went from Moberly High School to the U.S. Military Academy at West Point and eventually commanded the largest American fighting force ever assembled, was our nation's last five-star general officer and first Chairman of our Joint Chiefs of Staff.

At the 2002 Bradley Symposium, LTC Jay Carafano, then editor at the National Defense University at Fort McNair in Washington, D.C., told the audience one of the key reasons Bradley was not high on the public awareness screen was because of his low profile on the silver screen. Hollywood's big films about World War II didn't have much of a role for Bradley. LTC Carafano noted Bradley was on screen in “Patton,” “The Longest Day” and “Saving Private Ryan” only briefly, hardly a leading character.

At this year's Bradley Symposium, two of the Truman Presidential Library's leading historians will make the point that Bradley was a pillar of leadership in his time.

Tom Heuertz, associate education coordinator, and Ray Geselbracht, education and academic outreach coordinator, at the great Independence museum will try to explain how highly Bradley was esteemed by President Harry S. Truman. “Truman saw him as one of the world's greatest generals ever, in the same class with Hannibal and Napoleon,” Heuertz said yesterday.

Because of the positions he held, Bradley clearly was a favorite of at least three Presidents: Franklin Roosevelt, Truman and Dwight Eisenhower.

On a recent edition of “The Newshour with Jim Lehrer,” Lucian Truscott IV, a noted military history author, reflecting on American generals' leadership in Operation Iraqi Freedom, suggested the U.S. Central Command's Gen. Tommy Franks and others were nowhere near the class of “great generals like Patton, Bradley and Eisenhower.”

Monday, Colonel Jon H. Moilanen, dean of students and administration at the U.S. Army's Command and General Staff College in Leavenworth, Kansas, will describe how Bradley's military expertise still molds the careers of young officers who serve throughout the world today.

This is pretty heady stuff for a chap from our town. In a story about Bradley Day in The Washington Times recently, Moberly was referred to as “quaint” and “picturesque.”

For his part, Bradley was, indeed, quiet, modest and unselfish, along with very smart, a natural leader and an exceptional athlete. The kind of man you'd expect to come from a quaint and picturesque town like ours.

In the 1915 West Point class yearbook, it is reported Bradley was a sergeant, first sergeant and lieutenant; he was a sharpshooter; he was a member of the football team and track squad; and, perhaps most importantly to him at the time, he was the star of the Army baseball team all four years he was there.

The yearbook says, “His greatest passion is baseball, football and F Company. In baseball, many an opposing player has trifled once with Brad's throwing arm, but never twice. And a batting average of .383 is never to be sneezed at.”

“His most prominent characteristic is ‘getting there,’ and if he keeps up the clip he's started, some of us will some day be bragging to our grandchildren that, ‘sure, General Bradley was a classmate of mine,’” the yearbook says of our favorite son.

And, in the style of the day, the yearbook assigned each cadet a motto. Bradley's: “True merit is like a river, the deeper it is, the less noise it makes,” attributed to Anonymous.

How true that turned out.

Although his classmate Eisenhower became Supreme Allied Commander in World War II, and then President, Bradley was the first in his class to become a brigadier general.

One reporter wrote in May 1944, “Endowed with the mind of a mathematician and the body of an athlete, General Bradley is essentially American in ancestry, training and experience; he is slow spoken but sharp witted; he is polite and at times even diffident, but immensely certain of his own skill—the type of soldier who for 168 years has sustained the republic.”

And finally, this former captain of the Moberly High School baseball team, a boy worthy of his own shotgun at age 13, a young man who graduated 44th in a class of 164 at West Point, would tell a reporter about dinner at his humble home in Randolph County:

“We'd sit down at the supper table, my mother, my dad and I, and we'd talk things over. That's where I learned a lot about love of country and right from wrong.”

From a dinner table in Randolph County to the greatness of the world, that was the man who will be remembered Monday at the 2003 General Omar Bradley Luncheon, Lecture and Symposium.